

Message Text

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PAGE 01 TOKYO 06923 200612Z
ACTION NASA-02

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: TSPA, JA
SUBJECT: SPACE SHUTTLE CONTINGENCY PLANNING

REF: (A) 77 STATE 279674, (B) 77 TOKYO 12242,
(C) 77 TOKYO 18968, (D) 77 STATE 298258, (E) STATE
86299

1. MOFA HAS DONE PRACTICALLY NOTHING IN UNIFYING GOJ RESPONSE TO OUR REQUEST, FIRST MADE LAST DECEMBER AND REPEATED SEVERAL TIMES SINCE. ACCORDING TO MOFA (SCIENTIFIC AFFAIRS DIVISION, UN BUREAU), MAIN REASON IS THAT UNDERSTAFFED DIVISION HAS BEEN TOO BUSY TO GIVE ATTENTION TO REQUEST (AMONG MATTERS WITH WHICH DIVISION OFFICIALS HAVE BEEN BURDENED ARE PROBLEMS OF NUCLEAR-POWERED SATELLITES). RESPONDING TO OUR RENEWED PRODDING, DIVISION OFFICIAL PLEDGED MAXIMUM EFFORT TO PRODUCE AT LEAST BASIC AGREEMENT TO CONTINUED NASA PLANNING FOR CONTINGENCY LANDING OF SPACE SHUTTLE AT KADENA AIR BASE. IN FACT, HE SAID THAT APPROVAL IN PRINCIPLE COULD BE EXPECTED SHORTLY.

2. HOWEVER, IN SUBSEQUENT MEETING OF DR. PIKUS OF UNCLASSIFIED

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PAGE 02 TOKYO 06923 200612Z

OES/APT/SA AND EMBOFF WITH SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AGENCY OFFICIALS RESPONSIBLE FOR SPACE MATTERS, LATTER SAID THAT FAST ACTION BY MOFA SHOULD NOT BE EXPECTED, SINCE COORDINATION WITH EXTRAORDINARILY LARGE NUMBER OF MINISTRIES AND AGENCIES WAS REQUIRED DUE TO SENSITIVITIES OVER MIXED CIVILIAN-MILITARY OPERATIONS, INTERNAL PROBLEMS IN OKINAWA WITH U.S. BASES THERE, AND LACK OF

FAMILIARITY WITH SHUTTLE AMONG NON-TECHNICAL OFFICIALS.
STA REPS HELD OPINION THAT MOFA'S HANDS WOULD BE TIED
UNTIL AFTER CURRENT DIET SESSION IS COMPLETED ON ABOUT
MAY 17. IF DIET WERE TO BECOME AWARE OF US PROPOSAL
WHILE IN SESSION, ANOTHER INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS MATTER
WOULD BECOME A DOMESTIC ISSUE DESIGNED TO EMBARRASS FUKUDA
GOVERNMENT.

3. ALTHOUGH WE RECOGNIZE THAT STA ANALYSIS MAY BE WRONG,
IT SOUNDS VERY CONVINCING TO US, TAKING INTO ACCOUNT
THAT STA WOULD STRONGLY SUPPORT USE OF KADENA FOR CONTIN-
GENCY LANDING IF ITS OPINION WERE SOUGHT. WE BELIEVE
THAT ALL THAT CAN BE DONE IS TO WAIT UNTIL DIET SESSION
ENDS BEFORE AGAIN PUTTING PRESSURE ON GOJ.

MANSFIELD

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